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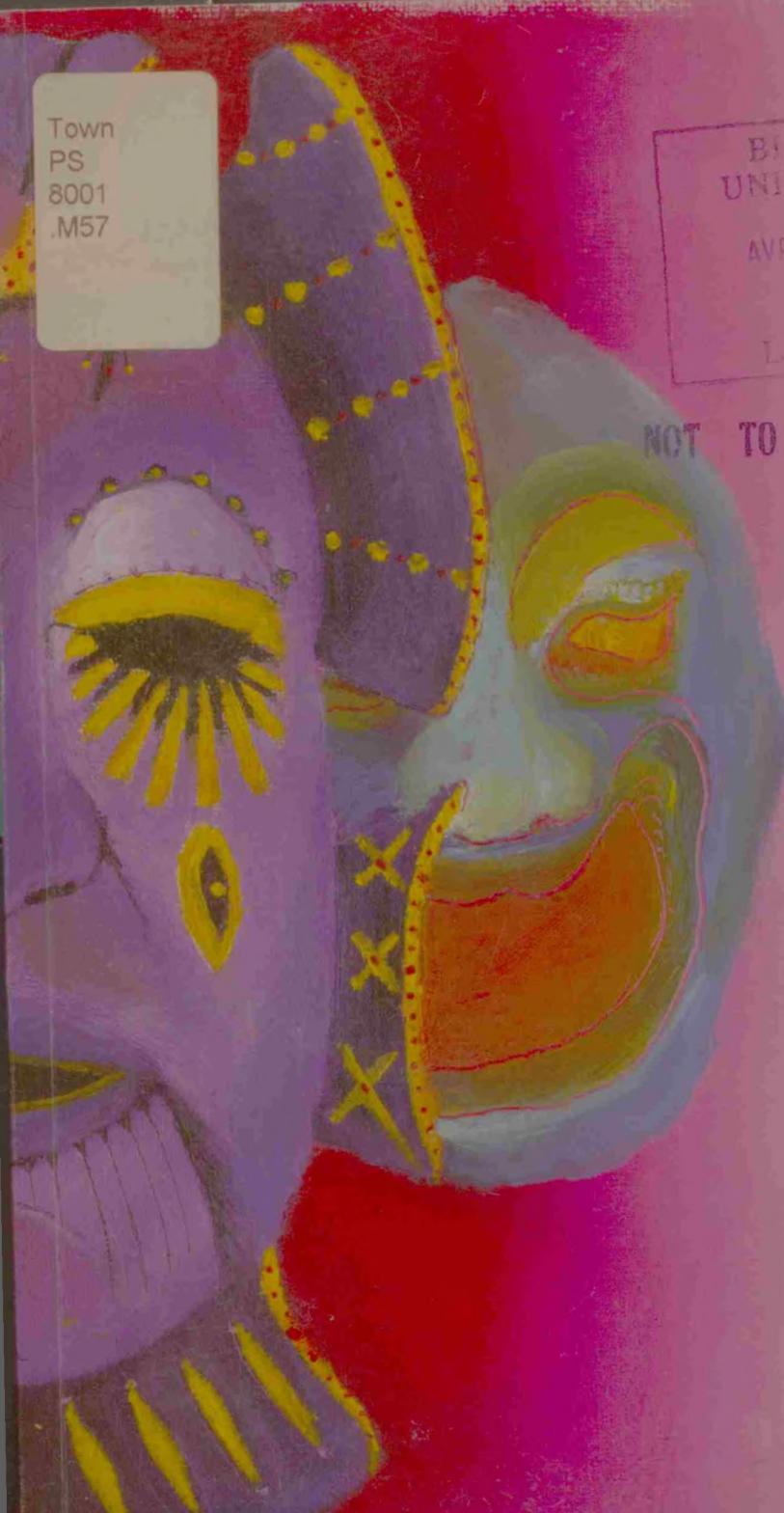
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The Mitre

Bishop's University Literary Magazine

2001-2002

109th Edition

Poets only play with words, you know; they too
 are masters of the Lie, the Grand Fiction.
 Poets and men like me who fight for something
 contained in words, but not words.

Gwendolyn MacEwen

Special thanks to

Joy Chandler, Tim Doherty, Catherine Evans, Marko Pecinovic and Michael Preston

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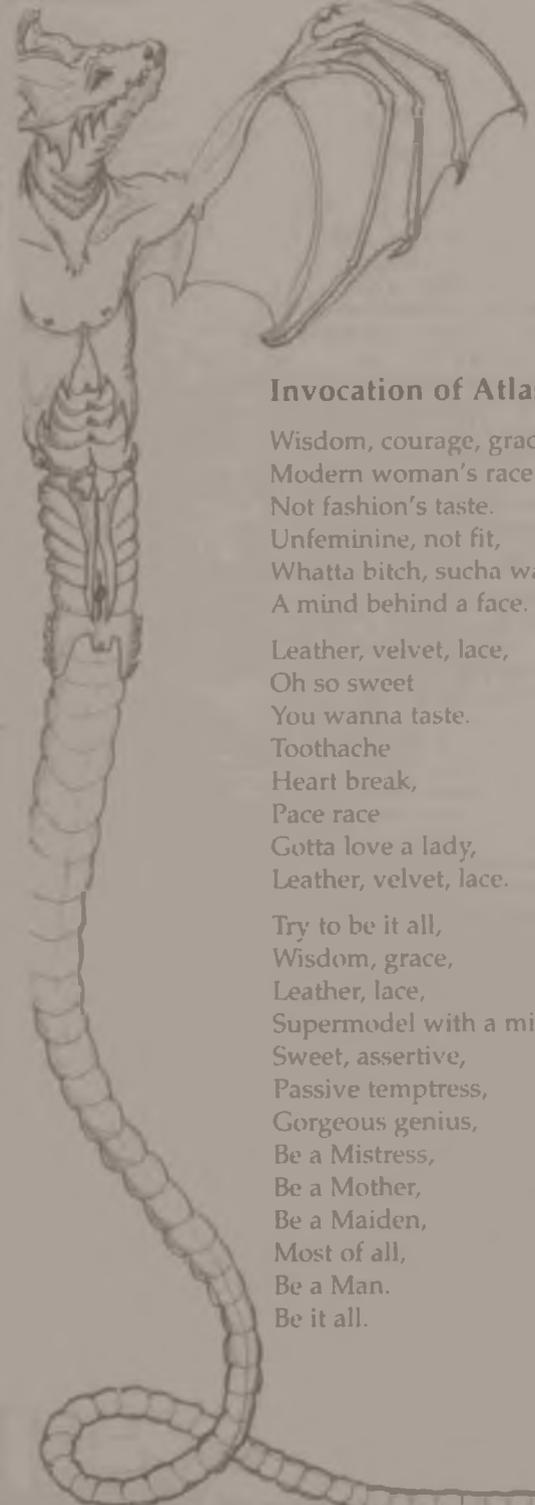
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Editor

Emily Evans



Invocation of Atlas

Wisdom, courage, grace.
Modern woman's race.
Not fashion's taste.
Unfeminine, not fit,
Whatta bitch, such a waste
A mind behind a face.

Leather, velvet, lace,
Oh so sweet
You wanna taste.
Toothache
Heart break,
Pace race
Gotta love a lady,
Leather, velvet, lace.

Try to be it all,
Wisdom, grace,
Leather, lace,
Supermodel with a mind,
Sweet, assertive,
Passive temptress,
Gorgeous genius,
Be a Mistress,
Be a Mother,
Be a Maiden,
Most of all,
Be a Man.
Be it all.

Never fall,
Never fear,
Never shed a tear.
So cool, so calm,
Collected and neglected,
Independent utterly,
Immune to folly.

Love him,
Leave him,
Never need him.
Give, take,
Orgasms never fake,
Wonder woman – Wow!
Every way, every day,
Yet so mundane!

But don't stress,
You'll find rest,
Pretensions wither away
When a wrinkle is found one day.

Fought for freedom,
Found twofold our role.
Athena, Diana, Aphrodite,
All are Atlas really.
Trinity of today.

Atlas is our Goddess.
Modern woman restless.
Atlas I invoke.

We choke on our yoke.
Liberation a joke.
Come a long way baby.
In which way lady?
Atlas, do you see?
The weight crushes we!
End the world with a sigh.
Atlas! Shrug off this lie.

Amanda McAleer

Labauvie's New Catalogue

How the intricacies
of your line
sing in the air
in friendly curve
and cadence,
how they show the
most usual form
in warm and happy rhyme,
yet in essence truest
such that all is re-
dis- or
un-
covered:
Moon Wine
and Minnie's
Lost Slipper as
Saturn's Last Ring
to River Mouth
and Fish are Jumpin'
and everything
down to the last point
is twirled
and smiled at
in its serious place
'mid star and wind.

Robert Hackett

I am the Mighty Loyal Midget

In an endless row of babies.
I interlope, loving it
And looking forward to the only consolation:
Circumstantial consummation.
A silent conversation in endless cribs
With loving liars, bent on hysterical procreation.
And the only conclusion:
Keep waiting.
My too fearful flesh is finally broken.
I have been seduced and I have been destroyed.
I hope only for consistent deception
But I remain the Mighty Loyal Midget.

Michelle MacAleese

Icarus

i
A strange, delicate thread, this earth,
That sets our course to die from birth,
A place where man must come of age
The moment that he takes the stage.
The moment when his son is born
Is when the father's youth is worn
And tender care becomes his plan,
For in the child must grow the man.

ii

I framed and waxed with thoughtful care
While in my maze with no one there;
He dreamed upon my promises,
Weightless, serene, above all this;
With greatest skill I curved our wings
And told him tales of wondrous things
That dwelled beyond the labyrinth walls
Where the tyrant gloats and victim crawls,
I saw his eyes reflect my words,
He saw the two of us as birds,
Radiant, as we cast our lot,
His face still breaks my sleep with thought.

iii

Past the harbors in sheltered bays,
Above the ploughman's startled gaze,
The shepherd and the fisherman
Are chained to earth when day is done
But we defied the tyrant's law,
Through science saw what no man saw.

iv

There! I see white legs in that pond,
A final splash and dark beyond,
With dimming eyes I see it still
As aging fathers always will,
I gave him wings to set him free,
His only fault was trust in me.

Frank Willdig

Fairy Tale Revisited

I reach out to the sky and sigh
Star light, star bright...
Let me sleep beside the gentle moon tonight,
Cuddle up with the wind
And spoon the stars
That burst alive like fireflies in flight.
I caress them with the touch of a timid woman-child
And on and
Off they go,
Like silly brats you can't help but love,
A humpty dumpty fragile state,
As constant as a rhyme
Like that in all the -
I thought you'd always reappear,
Turn my back on your loving eyes
Knock, knock,...
Who's there?
Sweet justice at my door,
And now there's clarity
through the looking glass;
Ate a mushroom of regret
And a wild berry of longing.
Hey, toss it all up!
Star light, star bright...
Please let me quench this appetite.

Emily Bennett

Birth of the Shack-Man Tonic

Seven dead lies
Thaw's-
Israel

Dracula Spy kiss
Deception -has-
Gone

Jelly Belly Night Marchers
-dare to- Darn that dream

Is anybody here that loves my Jesus?
Think Bubblehouse Boplicity

Rouge tonic moondreams
Rise up lifeblood
Shacklin' nights -feeding- invocation

Godchild Venus de Milo
Your Lady.

Michael Preston



Plaster #1, by Jen Smith

English Major

Talking to his mythical creation
he's thinking thoughts in reverse
depraved images
scourged into the make
carries a message and casts it down upon an ancient throne
thinking well above himself
himself above well thinking
he negates his audience and soars where they can't see him.

blue note book records in scrawling writing
personalized pronoun pens
lost his thought in the city where the scuba-divers drown in
Latin-phrase-words
beat upon the desk
tapped, ratta-tat, tapped
to the separate round of night
little jamesjoycejustice
of all time conjectured incoherently.

missing nothing, reveals again, the aim is heightened by
the reality of a situation
its opposition-association to those who didn't catch it
he establishes a moment, scrounging for a thought
above gravity and beauty and where this line co-joins
and they forgot all about the revolution until he sang that song
and then forgot again.

impatiently he's told his theorized amend
his flickered focus - missing only this:

and there, where angels lose their way
his mystified existence.

Rebecca King



The Park at Dusk

In the ebb of an August day, we recede, despite pearls, and drift in high heels toward the park. Slowly, the warm smell of summer wafts lazily to, in, over me. Like a layer of downy fuzz wrapping me up. Like my father used to when he'd whisper "snug as a bug". Placed tightly between layers of feathers, cotton, and squishy foam rubber like one special penny placed in the pocket of a small child for safe keeping. Silk, boas, flannel-sweet wine and warm milk all mixed in one.

Rose Morton

The Anniversary

Just off the highway
the fields and the hedges begin.
We wrapped ourselves in
a blanket of silence
and followed the flickering moonlight
through yellow basswood leaves.

We held hands and felt
the first bite of snow,
and you remembered
those footsteps years ago
and how they followed us through the snow
and found no fault in dying young.

Frank Willdig

Untitled

We drove off the highway onto this little dirt road. Just a little ways off the highway, not one hundred yards, and leading to some little farm. Grid, they call it, or corduroy, with gophers that'll pop up right in the middle, under your tires, almost. No point in swerving cause there's nowhere to swerve to. We all get out together, pat the dog too young to know to growl at strangers. The sun is setting, dipping low into the valley. A round ball trapped between the hills, setting its yellowy flame on the dead grass and lighting everything on fire. We're a little worried, because you never know with these farmers, so all three of us are trying not to get to the door first, but for the girl, there's no expectation to knock. The wife, about seventy just like her blue dress, weathered like her white house, her brown-red barn, her farm and Bill. "Bill's outside in the kennels. You go ahead. You go ahead and talk to Bill." Bill and his malamutes and huskies, barking in their kennels, the sun setting their eyes on fire. Bill and his blue-eyed dogs. Sleeping on Bill's property that night, under a dark quilt flecked with glass, enveloped by the night music of coyotes and their children, a lonely tenor suddenly clefs the cooled earth with his slow, ululating dirge. Bill's malamutes crescendo, their song swells and the coyotes answer in syncopated sympathy.

Sarah Dowling

Upon being in class, staring at a duo chromatic chalkboard;
and upon sitting in an uncomfortable chair,
wishing I had a smoke, and doodling descriptive poems
in the margin of my notebook

Chalkboard
black and white
as the night
i stumbled home
drunk
in the snow

Chair
cradling my bottom
as a granite ledge
cradles a perched gargoyle

Fingers
tapping impatiently
nicotine-jaundiced
like an old gym shirt
stained under the armpits

Chris Bird

Crushed

My heart beats like 80's electronica
With an absent bass.
You give me goosebumps
That won't go away
A mouth full of cotton swabs.
Butterflies feel more like vultures
Beating their wings in my stomach
Waiting to pick at the pieces.
I'm drunk and hungover all at once,
Cry and laugh in one exhalation
And
Watch you walk by
Confidently smiling the whole time.

Nancy Morin

Sad One

You chased me on your bike down the street:
I'm sorry, didn't mean for that to happen and
(we're not in High School) wouldn't you
like to go out sometime?
And so we did.

Coffee and the Monument and bad, cheap movies and
nightwalks and finally, to bed.
Then, later, pad thai at Nantha's
Photos and dusty bookstores and
running through rain (giggly-drunk) to the subway.

And we talked, we talked, we talked.
Sometimes I just listened.

Then one day, you forgot to pack or
I had rehearsal or work maybe
neither of us had time money energy.
Your eyes and the perfect symmetry of your face
Stopped surprising me.
You no longer watched me get dressed.

I tried not to hurt you, I wept when I did,
But I was, after all, under your skin
and could only tear my way back out.
That's all you can recall.

I suppose it time you chased me
back up the street.

Amanda McCoy

Alone again

Or at last
It is painful
Or purifying
My soul aches
Or breathes
There is a hole
Or room for improvement
Will it never end
Or is this a beginning
On a twisted journey
Or is this normal
Alone again
Or at last

David Fortier

P.R.

I wish she would tell me these
things
these truths of her
and the world
that tumble and churn inside us both
winding their way out
by candlelight
and twisting impatience.

The dark shadow that passes
through
the face of a woman
sleeping beauty,
and the tragedy that
strengthens the arch of her
back and brow
slip, as we open our laughter
to the molted purple sky
while remembering what trees looked like and the
sound of breaking.

I see her
scratching her forehead
with the hand of a
wise artist
awed at the wonder of rain.

Jessica Van Horssen

Elemental

Neon darkness with maniac blinking
Violent lines etched painfully on brain.
Ceaseless eye-blinding glow of eternity
Living forever without black glow of light.

Jenn Kang



The Hand, by Curtis Mullin

Untitled

phone rings – 9am
no music
pass me the pianist
play anything
hair and makeup for four follows
spray, 3-pronged lashes, glue, dried-flowers, pipe-cleaners and silver bells
back at home
a cool, crisp chardonnay blends with ambient jazz
stinky cheese
swirls like steam from a teapot amongst
tulle, time and tissues
a quick fag in between to calm the nerves
guests begin to arrive
not guests really, more just
family and friends
humming and floating around like busy little bees
I remember that intense tightness
wound up like a spinning top
held in limbo
car arrives
Dan's driving
1957 charcoal grey English Rover
scarlet red interior
doors that open from front to back
we parked for a while
not far away
chatted – about what I don't remember
look at the time!
butterflies returned and began to dance like microwave popcorn
as we pulled up
and
guided by a friendly hand
I stepped one foot
and then another
into a new life

Molinda Mcclifford

The Awakening

The calming sound of your sweet voice
carries through the breeze,
and when I thought I stood alone,
you were there among the darkened trees.

With the help of your enduring love
I have changed, and even grown.
And I feel as long as I have you,
I won't ever be alone.

Though I may never be the rose you deserve,
and only petals in the wind,
I hope and pray you won't over look
the love that may be found within.

Stacey Moore

Portrait of an Elderly Man

The chair he sits upon
Day after day after day,
Faces the window
Where he gazes out to the sandy shore.
Rocking back and forth,
Never changing his stare.
He never sleeps, hardly eats.
As he never speaks,
We don't know what he is thinking.
Sometimes a beautiful bird
Will sit on the window
And sing for him.
The sides of his mouth
Creep upwards into an awkward smile.
His eyes light up
As if seeing this for the first time;
Then in an instant
His thoughtless expression returns,
His eyes oblivious,
Until the next songbird sings.

Kim Misner



Shinsuke Kurida
for Heather
Young
April 6, 2001

Scattered Thoughts

I wanted to tell you just how much...
words with no meaning, meaning no words...
You see, the thought goes so fast
that to put it down on paper is a torture.
It's 2:25 at night, funny, for you it's the day...
How did it happen?
Why did the distance make it painfully clear?
or maybe we are better off blindfolded...
I opened my eyes to your hazel ones
and saw you in a new light, oh well,
does it really matter if it was twilight?
Twilight... taste this word...
It leads to lies, deceit
I keep a picture of you...
Why would you even care?
Bitter smile... Yes, my bitter smile
is my trademark these days
For all I want to say...
It's too late. You're gone, not willing to hear.
You know, you always knew, right?
Well, I guess I should finally say it.
I... Yes I got your message... love...
I hope you're happy now... you.

Margarita Bizina

Untitled

A brilliant
eternal flash
seemingly teasing
my faltering sight
A brilliant door lights
my eyes
The center-
an embryo
of my failing gift or
unworldly revelation.

Karolina Figarski

Sanity Exercise

Sweltering highway
Ascending highness
Carrying soul cargo
Absorbed in line

Lifeless dreamers
Trusting judgement
Maddening silence
Resolved by tar

Counting backwards
Forgotten pattern
Conditioned to escape
Nothing left

Rising light
Breaks trance
Yearning for sound
Returning to spell

Energy penetrates
Earth grounds me

Back to the line.

Michael Preston

So, this is me

moody, secretive, bitter, fearful.
sometimes sweet and sometimes tearful.
lost in a world where all is wrong,
never weak, but much too strong.

so here I am, this is me,
but is this who I am supposed to be?
lost in a world where all is wrong,
am I right to be too strong?
is it okay to have feelings suppressed,
am I allowed to be slightly depressed?

questions for you my dear sweet friend,
and here I am – lost again.

Stacey Moore

Cerebral Real Estate

In the window of imagination
Appears her face
With faded smile
And moot laughter.
Feelings of longing,
No longer felt.
Nothing sensed,
In heart's fleeting
Memory.
Days gone by;
Of feelings shared,
And thoughts of
Reconciliation.
Half imagined.
Shall she always stand?
As the many encounters
Of our previous times.
As the years have faded
Into subjects themselves,
She becomes more
Than she ever had been.
For yesterday is lost,
Today is already past,
Shall tomorrow ever come
For we are no more.
The memory ghosts,
Haunting and taunting
The images of the brain,
Forever changing
And becoming jaded.
When green could be blue
And her name the same,
Attitudes forgotten in
The extinguished flame.

Stephen Campbell



La Tristesse du Zeus by Marko Pecinovic

Feasting

Smooth leather
under coarse, broken skin
of my soles.
On my calloused finger
pushed over a greasy fingernail,
a ring of gold.
Sagging shoulders
under the shimmery softness
of a fine weave,
straighten.

At your table
my place is chosen
honored
my feet swing.
My cup, golden,
catches the light.
Soaking in your easy wine
my lips are feasting.

As we are dancing
our bodies full of music
and down my temples
behind my ears
warm oil trickles
to the small of my back.

Beloved, in your house
I am home.

Tanya Bellehumeur-Allatt

Untitled

A man bounces forever in his memory
on the surface of his history's lake
and fishing not, nor tailing the wind
he bounces on the surface of all he has been,
until the man sinks to the bottom of time
past the edge of his memory's depth.
He falls into nowhere, and nowhere is here,
he is nothing, is static, forgetting in fear.

Forgotten pain bruises the deep night dreams
and I sing despite the good-byes, the nail-biting and the lonely metro.
When the road ends it leaves an awesome
absence, full and clear.
And I am left to touch the sky with designs
conceived alone, and the precious confusion
somewhere between the dreams of night
and those of day.

Michelle MacAleese

Strangers in the Night

The night air chills, stars reflecting off a dark mirror.
We huddle for warmth.
Ancient trees bordering the lake become shadowed strangers
Strange because I feel closer to them than I do to you.
Discuss.
Philosophy, theology, politics, everything
and nothing all at once.
Trying to prevent silence from thickening the air.
Molasses in March regardless.
Anxiety crawls like a spider on my skin.
Taste your moist breath giving me mouth to mouth
From a distance
Yet
Suffocate alone in the darkness.

Nancy Morin

In Times of Absence

When images
Are tousled
In a
Kaleidoscope
of emblazoned
Gems
To be
Twisted into
Mosaics of
Indifferent schemes
Set apart
By a mimicking hand
A scattering of vision
A shattering of gems
Creating blind fervor
And brilliant flashes
Of the
Nameless and precious
Karolina Figarski

Angel Dust

Although you grew your angel wings,
and floated up into the sky,
throughout my world, my life, and my
heart,
your presence will never die.

The only one that could understand
why I loved you so,
was the one I found inside of you,
the one I can't let go.

I think someday we may meet again,
and this lonely time will pass,
the echoed silences will disappear,
and our time together will last.

I hope you were looking down,
while floating up into the sky,
because until I make that same journey,
it was our last good-bye.

And although you grew your angel wings,
I will hold memories of you in my heart,
and in that sense, this love will grow,
and we won't ever be apart.

Stacey Moore

Within

Locked within the cavernous corridors of my mind
Lies the answer to questions still left unasked
Clues to the mystery of existence and beyond
Blueprints to our eternal essence

Kept within the majestic chambers of my heart
Are the secrets of sexuality
The source of dreams and prayer
The pain and pleasure of love

Entangled within the extravagant edifice of my groin
The need and seed to create another world is carried
A greater selfless purpose is kindled
The utter simplicity of complications

Guarded by the beast within the depths of my soul
Lies the compass of destiny

These tools within
I am prepared to navigate my
Voyage through eternity.

David Fortier

Dreams

I am a white rabbit and a shit load of drugs
I am Vaseline on a camera lense
I am smoke and flashing lights
I am Jimmy Stewarts's flying head
I am detached speech filled with clues
"There's no place like home" she says
While clicking her heels.
It must be a bad dream. Who would want
To go back to Kansas?

Wes Cathcart

Endless Summer

It was late August or early September when I first heard of your arrival... I think it was anyway... I can't really remember, because my summer vacation never ended from the year prior to your messy birth... It was still the summer for me that cold December night, down by my thinking spot, in the front seat of my beat-up Honda where you were conceived... So too, those days after Valentine's when your mother threw me out and called me an asshole... It was July when I chose to move on and sentence myself to a lifetime of your hatred... and my own regret. My lawyer protected me in those waning summer days... I got to know him before I even knew you existed... It was a week or so after you were born that she let me see you... you sucked on my bicep thinking it was her breast... It was still summer for me, when I dressed in a suit and walked down that aisle to hear her say that she didn't care if I saw you... I chose not to during that endless summer... it was your first summer, but my last summer as a child... I don't see myself in you, just a beautiful child, that I may never know.

Stephen Campbell

Tour Bus

Standing alone in the spotlight, it gives you a headache
you forget your lines and compensate with sexual antics
someone in the audience belches from boredom,
it smells like teen spirit, and that makes you hungry
you have not eaten since the glass of powdered
milk you had yesterday. It is Tuesday and you are
already having a bad year. You want sex but your
hand is asleep. Your ultimate goal is world
domination
but you can't open the tooth paste. Somehow you know
that someone was hit by the Allman brothers tour bus
and you are jealous. You
are the Zen master of female
castration and you wonder why you can't get a date.
But it all boils down to this "the sun will rise tomorrow
and if it doesn't it will be awful dark."

Anonymous



The Face by Curtis Mullin

Hideout

Sometimes when things get crazy, I wish I could hide somewhere. Just have a place where no one would ever look for me. Do you have a place like that? I did, once. That was before Aunt Pauline died. Her death was a confusion, disturbing but not painful. But the loss of my hideout... There was this little cottage we used to go to in the summer. It wasn't a real cottage, just a couple of camping trailers parked on a huge wooded lot. It belonged to my father's aunt – that's Pauline – and her boyfriend Phil. She was a brown old raisin, always sitting out in her plaid sun hat while she smoked cigarette after cigarette. She scared me, but I had lots of hiding places where she'd never find me. The cottage was far away in Bethany, and it had trees to climb, and bird's nests, and dried-up mushrooms that made smoke when you stepped on them. The days we drove up there were the best ones in the summer.

I'm sandwiched between my brothers in the back seat. The road out the window looks wet, but the puddles keep disappearing. All our windows are down and sometimes a bee comes in. I could be stung. It's an adventure. Dad's got a tape in radio. It's the same one every time we go. *Going to the chapel and we're... gonna get married...* when we get there, I jump out. "We need help unloading this stuff, honey". I'm already gone. It's hot. The trees are buzzing. I check on my flower garden, remembering names. Sweet Williams, Marigolds, Bachelor's Buttons. Then onto the patch where I pull a carrot out of the dirt and eat it right away. I go through the half-moon of wild roses Dad dug up in some field and planted in the yard. I always smell each one. I like the symmetry. I want to know if they all smell exactly the same. I can hear Pauline laugh as she tells my father in French that I'm like a bumblebee. It embarrasses me.

I go into the trees where they can't see me anymore. It's cooler here, and I like the pattern on the ground. I see a cedar in the woods. It looks funny here, because in the city cedars are so small and neat, and this one's all bushy. I peek through the branches and see long grass on the other side. I crawl through, and stand up on a little circular patch of grass. I'm surrounded by trees on all sides, all the way up to the sky. Only I know this place. Maybe I can go get my sleeping bag and more carrots and just hide here forever. How long will they look for me? Will anyone cry if I never come back?

I feel such a thrill in this little clearing. Secrets take place here at night. I never decide exactly what – it's too scary to think. But big animals must come here, and owls in the trees, and they don't make any noise at all. After I find this round little patch of grass, I keep coming back to hide. I read books here. My stomach gets wet from the dirt. My brothers look for me, but they never find me. I leave some of my flowers for the night animals, and sometimes little pieces of bread, just to see if they're there when I come back.

Then one day, I'm coming out of the woods and Dad's talking to a strange man. His eyes are all red. I've never seen him look like this, I'm scared. Mom takes me inside the trailer and gives me a glass of Kool-aid. "Honey, Aunt Pauline had a heart attack today. She was very old..." There's a lump in my stomach. I was hiding in the woods and Pauline got sick and she didn't get to see me again... smelling flowers the way she liked. But I feel even worse for never liking her, for thinking she smelled bad, for noticing the hairs above her lip. I know about God and I think I'm in big trouble. I go to the funeral and watch everybody crying, but I can't. Nobody's ever died before. I'm not sure how I'm supposed to act. But mostly I want to go back into the woods, and I can't. I feel responsible somehow, as though hiding brought on her heart attack. A couple of months later, Phil dies too, and everyone says it's because his heart was broken.

That was when Dad didn't want to go to the cottage anymore. I wanted so much to ask if we could go back, but every time that lump would be in my stomach. It didn't seem right that my special place could exist without me. I found other trees to climb and we eventually moved near a graveyard, where there were lots of places to explore. But somehow nothing was ever as good as my secret hideout in the woods. I grew taller, read book after book, but the lingering desire for solitude remained.

I never went back. Dad sold the land to a mink farmer, he cut the woods down and put up a long skinny barn. I tried telling my parents about the clearing once, but they just laughed. "Maybe old Pauline and Phil are haunting it". I don't think so. Sometimes I dream about it, and there's only one person there – a little girl eating dirty carrots and reading a book.

Amanda McCoy

Winner of the Noni Howard Award for Creative Writing

Untitled

this is grandma's apple pie
mass-produced and shipped in freezer trucks
directly to your local supermarket

this is a big fucking luxury suv
with traction control
and six-way electric leather seats
that guzzles gas
like a frat boy shotguns beer

This is the grueling hike to the summit of mt. washington
only to be greeted by a parking lot full of cars
and a jungle of concession stands

this is the statue of liberty
wearing camouflage fatigues
holding a nine-finger to your head

this is the elimination of the middle class

this is john cougar mellancamp
pretending he's still blue-collar
even though it's been a long time
since he actually believed that dancing was everything

this is the most powerful man in the world
under threat of impeachment because he got a hummer
in the oval office

this is america

Chris Bird

Youth, thanks to Joseph Conrad

youth is something that, paradoxically, crosses the generations

youth is the quest for the ideal in life
the great illusion is that life will actually give you something ideal

youth is reckless
walking on hot coals, searching for the fire

youth is optimism
an unbreakable belief that everything will work out

youth is romance
investing in everything with a kind of eccentric glamour

youth is sailing in a ship that is long past its best days

youth is heroic
life is an adventure rather than an ordeal

youth is dangerous
youth lets the safety lights go out
youth sins against the harmony of the universe

youth is silly
but charming
and beautiful

Chris Bird

The habitual drinkers

these are hollow men
having nothing within and nothing without
they are collectively alone
as they sit and pickle themselves

Chris Bird



Moroccan Majesty by Marko Pecinovic

Carnival

The ghosts of dead helicopters
haunt tear gas
smothering a historic city
 (always lovely this time of year)
beauty and purpose trampled
 by sirens and songs
 prayers and drums
 metal on metal
 and feet pounding on stained asphalt

Still

little old ladies hoisting signs
and children wearing their carnival masks
 dance into a corner,
 where grim (nervous) uniforms
 and a chain-link joke
 stifle chants, breath and perspective
 in the horrible tasteable silence
 (just pray that neither side breaks, now
 'cause you know what they'll tell you this was).

Barrage of sound and fury
clenches down
into the fine white heat
of deafening eyes

(LISTEN TO ME
LISTEN TO ME
LISTEN TO ME)

reflected mutely in ranks of shields and shining helmets.

Priya Raju

The date WW II began

Wicked smile
pouring rain
taxi driver is asking my name

Hurry up
to escape
from the cigarette smoke

To the freshness of sweet
Well, so what that it's wet?
so what that it's dark?

Street lamps show me the way
to avoid every trap
How ironic!

Nature remembers this day
crying just like the people
sensing their pain

I glance over my shoulder
at the business bar

What has happened
to the usually cheerful crowd?

They remember
me too,
every soul in this world

And the drinks
suddenly
are so cold

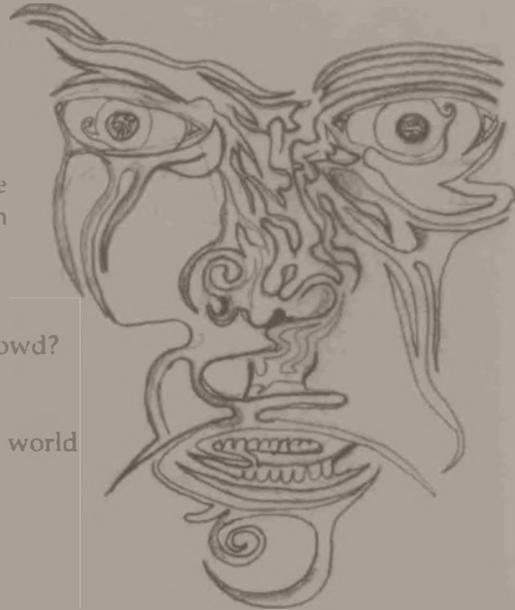
Like the raindrops
rolling down my neck

I shiver,
I ponder,
I speed up my step

The thought never leaves
my inquiring mind

Nature remembers
the day it began

Magarita Bizina



Dementia by Marko Pecinovic

And Day Begins

Voices, singing fresh the wet morning
dew-licked pastures are stirring for the sunrise salute.
As the last forms of darkness
slink now to the sidelines
daybreak rings triumph over the deafness of sleep.

And inside the chamber
a woman rolls over
shocked from her linen by a digital beep.

The curtain still drawn
she glides to the mirror
flicks on the light switch and shows her distaste.

Blinded by looking
she picks up her war paint
smears on an image and ruins the face.

And outside the chamber
the world has erupted
washed pure with colours, the brush of the sun.

The autumn's a circus of sumptuous splendor
clashing with crimsons and rouges of light.
Yet when she emerges
perverted sensations
all she can think is "How tacky!"

Molly MacDonald

Disillusionment

Could it be? In this age of hedonism, nihilism, and postmodern pessimism, where we can only moan quietly into the darkness – a miracle? Not just Christ's mug found in mud, or the Madonna's visage in a rust stain – delusions dreamt by faith famined souls – but an honest to You-Know-Who miracle? I had to see this.

Dancing in the streets, they seemed your typical new age Jesus freaks. With the full gamete of hallelujahs and shivering seizures of the holy spirit, spliced with some kumbiyah guitar singing amidst it all. How sarcastically I would depict it all to my equally skeptical friends while sipping black double espressos, food for the disillusioned soul. Yet, how beautiful they looked with their flashing colors, singing with all emphasis from their soul, body and spirit enlivened into an ecstasy seen in each face – and who can but wonder of what such wonders their illusions convinced them of? Who, upon seeing tears glistening in their eyes as their comrades carefully bring them back from a fulfillment never before known can but yearn for disillusionment of disillusionment?

Then the crowd split, like the Red Sea before Moses, to reveal the girl. A girl! Hardly grown into her training bra, but without the awkwardness of fumbling adolescence, with an air of confidence I had seen in few women. Knowing from rumor what would happen next, and seeing her being lifted onto a cross, no faith kept me from trying to prevent what the modern world calls madness and these lunatics call religion. But the crowd kept me back, and she stretched out her arms willingly to the cross, an eager Christ for the nails to be driven in. The dancers went into a fever. The hammers struck as I cried "No!", drowned out by the hymns, her screams, and the crowd's jubilation. Water to wine, beautiful girl into crucified martyr, either way it pours red upon the thirsty faithful. No sooner were the nails driven through than the men who had buried them in her flesh tore them free. Still held back by the crowd, I wondered if I would watch her bleed to death before me. This was not what I had wanted, this was no subject of sarcastic chuckling at the silliness of belief, followed by statements that we are all oh-so-sane. My own mockery sickened, withered within me, and was washed away by her blood that gushed down upon the pedestal they had erected her cross upon. She still upheld her hands, the flow of the blood raining...no...now slowing...now trickling...now dripping as flesh reweave, and my knees gave way. She showed to all her unmarked hands smeared with blood, and cried, "In this world, there is much too much bleedin', and not enough healin'!" To an exuberant cry of Hallelujahs that almost drowned her out, and me amongst the voices.

Amanda McAleer

Turkish Rug

Two weeks ago, my cat carried a dead pigeon into the cement courtyard of our apartment block. The block is a hollow square, and the courtyard is filled with beerbottles, cigarettebutts, and chickenbones. The bird was decapitated, and my cat had placed it outside the livingroom window, keeping it within her adhesivegaze. It's possible that she just found the pigeon there, and it had actually bludgeoned its own head off flying into windows. I don't know much about that pigeon, other than the cat developed an unhealthy affection for it. I told the super on many occasions that I didn't think that it was my responsibility to remove the pigeon carcass. Finally I did submit, picked it up with a camouflagegreengarbagebag, and disposed of it neatly outside the block, in the dumpster in the alley adjacent to rue St. Marc.

The dumpster is accessible from the courtyard via a dank tunnel which runs through the basement. There are two steel doors at each end of the tunnel. It took me about three months to discover this mystery dump, and my fellow apartment block tenants were mighty pleased when I did find it and took it upon myself to remove the thirty-seven garbage bag pile-up from the fire escape outside of my ground-level threeandahalf.

So I am sure that you can imagine my qualmishness, (both from her septicstench and screwygarbledlook) when this morning, my cat strolled in through the livingroom window carrying the decomposing headless carcass of that oncepigeon two weeks after its initial appearance. Her head high, her jaw wide and fixed around that frothing pigeon belly. At first, I couldn't tell if it was pride or devilry.

Then she walked over to my paprikaprimrose paledpurple four-by-six Yajabadir and dropped that gangrened carcass, a cavity on the rug's intricate weave.

Emily Evans

Ode to my Shelter and to my Companion and to all his Trashy Books

It's not the lion's den.
You didn't bring the walls down.
You're not a ninja spy warrior
Or even Charles Atlas-
Although there is some resemblance, I must confess.
But you built Bohemia
And filled it with food and books and a silver hubcap
And I hide there from the world.
And when you make pasta and carve pumpkins
And leave your math books on every flat surface
And we make fun of Rex Murphy -
You looking in from the balcony,
It feels even more like home.
Can a ninja spy warrior do that?

You get to be the hero in the story of your own life.

Amanda McCoy

drinking gin out of a dirty coffee mug

a smoke bent up like a wrecked car
hanging off chapped lips.

thinking about shit that should be committed to paper
but won't be
because shit is foggy like london
and impossible to focus on for too long

trying to fill an empty space with booze and nicotine
and still not being satisfied after fourteen doubles
and fifty-two smokes

stepping out the door at four in the morning to clear the head
but fresh air clarifies thoughts about as well as another drink will
which is going to be poured anyway.

Chris Bird

Late One Sunday Afternoon

I am tired of this cluttered room
Of offices, newspapers
Of sickly, dusty, indoor plants
Yesterday,
It was a warm afternoon
We were sitting, laughing, under a lilac tree
On such a day
One is struck
By the murky darkness that awaits inside
Pale light filtering through stained curtains
Standing in the middle of small, untidy rooms
That smell like sour milk, sweat, stale sex

The sun was hot
But the ground was damp
And we sat for a while before
diffusing to our lives

I feel like crying
For everyone who has known the happiness
Of lilacs on a lazy spring afternoon
And had it taken away

Rose Morton



Smoke by Curtis Mullin

A Pretend Secret

On goes this transparent charade
Reality is suspended
I dare you to call me on this bluff:

We're driving through invisible space,
Those road trips that make my eyes burn,
And thoughts now bleed into the sun;
Tattoo us together with a tan;
The white flesh is the root
of where you will always be
I read your face in the dark
And you turn in me with every waking page
I'll roll into you with a lapping wave.

Mask my words and breath in my thoughts,
What a fine hallucination,
This medley of soul-stained spots.
It's truth encaged,
Like Galileo,
Waiting the inevitable glory day.

Emily Bennett

A Barefoot Morning (Interrupted)

The mist swirls behind my eyes
as the grass sweats into my blue jeans
with its effort to open the day.
I like it and smile.
Sauntering across the street
he soon drowns out the screeching
testament of grasshoppers.

I've heard of his love.
His mother, the Father, apple pie
fried chicken, impish women and dirty rye
so he shows me the Elvis sticker
he tenderly glued to his wallet.
I laugh and touch it for good luck
as we tease the melodrama of poetry
and before he leaves,
I make him take off his shoes
and I see that something bright or brilliant
has shifted my morning praise.

Jessica Van Horssen

Winner of the F.R. Scott Award for Creative Writing

Creation Story

A huge turquoise ring, shiny like a beetle's back,
or a turtle's.

A tiny lake, reflecting light in black lines,
resting on a skinny brown finger.

The first turtle, floating in the ocean,
holding the other animals on her back,
trying to make land.

The finger goes through the ring,
Stretches, merges and makes itself into an
old woman.

The hand that wears the ring holds a needle
and its twin holds a cloth that slowly turns blue.

The needle dives and dives, like a kingfisher,
into a bag of beads.

The needle holds the beads, lets them float
down a thin white string and the hands
caress, wrap, stitch, tightly sewing them onto the cloth,
creating the sky on a brand-new legging.

The ring moves, turquoise hovering over blue,
carried by the old woman, who separates
sky from water with earth.

Sarah Dowling

The Swan Pond

Majesty in a long white neck
Shapely eyes, shaped like the over-smooth bodies
that glide and glide, dangerous in green water.
A floating fleet of dreadnought bread-eaters,
propelling their boat-bodies toward me,
mounting their attack on my regrettably unshod feet,
trumpeting their war-cry for more bread.

Their pond is not a real one, not even old.
Green water encased in cement bricks,
arches built to look like ruins, prepackaged decay.
Nature creeps in in the white plumage,
but soon is seduced by the sweet taste of bread.

Blood bread. Hot little icicle teeth rake
over my feet, speckling the white bread red.
The swans see that it drips down.
Blood oozing, falling, dyeing the dying bread crumbs,
the war-weary croutons.
They sink, waterlogged, or are gobbled up by the
gorgeous, gorge-ous armada in the civic park.

Sarah Dowling

Creation Story 2

A sweet taste in her mouth.
Stretched over an orange couch,
reading.
Sharp little flecks of thought dance
on her lips, her eyebrows
and a thick strip of light
from a small window
lies across her.
One tiny ring jumps out,
fragment of semi-preciousness,
casting its reflection all over the wall,
making stars in our house.

Sarah Dowling

Canadian Gothic

Mom and Dad
Twenty-eight years ago,
Wedding-time or thereabouts.
They stand squinting into the camera
The way everyone always did
Positioned in front of their home
Grinning widely, hip but quaint.
Matching shirts: "Property of State Prison".
(Where are those shirts now?
I'd wear one.)
Her hair is waist-length, straight,
He, now bald, has a mess of curls.
Hard not to giggle.
There are exactly three twinkles in his eye
And he is holding her the way
he holds her now.

Amanda McCoy

Home

The first human hand that planted the seed,
Waved our hunting fathers into the past,
And unchartered forests were soon to lead
To the fence, temple, and mariner's mast.
The farmer who waved the last nomad good-bye,
Across the trackless European plain,
Had shelter in place of the open sky,
And a garden instead of untrodden terrain.
And most importantly, it was the home
That eased the terrible perils of life,
That allowed him to ponder arch and dome
And to make safe every man's child and wife.
A civilizing thing that gives us breath,
A place for forgetting both time and death.

Frank Willdig

in transit

Model houses
row on row.
We few
the coping
make this our own,
sprawling on short suburban grass
or laughing and loitering
in the garish lighting
of Tim Horton's friendly windows.
Flocks of hi-tech workers
drive thru for coffee and bagel
and jog it off at lunch,
while their scrawny offspring
braying with angst
reel through parking lots,
daddy's scotch
wincing down their throats
burning in GAP-gilded guts.
Just a bustling rut
in which to talk and twist gently
on beloved dark piss-stained swings,
mingling disgust with fantasy
and dreaming quiet plans
under stars washed out by streetlamps.

Priya Raju



On the Shore of Lake Ontario

I gaze upon the scene.
I stand on the shore and quietly wait, a visitor uninvited.
The stillness astounds me.
The stars wink from above.
No sounds on the lake but the occasional flap of ducks landing.
A flock sails in, and though I cannot see them, I hear
their echoes across the water.
They watch me from a distance.
I can hear them laughing as they see I've discovered
only now
what they have known since they first broke free into this world:
The power of this place after midnight has gone
and dawn has yet to arrive streaming glory.
Silence returns, and it is here that I leave them –
ducks on the water at twilight time.
The fog makes me unsure that I ever really saw them.
My vision, unaccustomed to a total lack of light.

Jenn Kang

4 a.m. Patient

Quelled diagonal across the bed,
your body traced heavy
a residual rockface.

On the rosewood dresser
your passport
to lobster tails
lazy matinees
and cool white sheets
all packed into a 150 ml. syringe.

Pools on the pillow's lip
your breath yokes with mine
fog swaggers in thru the doorway
the shutters are a metronome racket.

Emily Evans



Lines Composed on the Shores of the Massawippi (sometime after September 11, 2001)

The World that surrounds us
Roars by to its own rhythms
Beyond our control,
Forever our destiny
To ignore the importance of
War.

Shaded by groves of trees
Blanketed in the peace they bring,
The water churns to the beat
Of guitar and drums
As friendships flourish
In the November sun.

Gulls scavenging at water's edge
Take message of freedom
As far as they can
Stretching across the ocean
Heard by absent friendly ears.

Fading light... a fading slumber
Of the worries and strife
In everyday life
Gone in raven's flight
Swallowed by nature's silence.

Through the "unknown remembered gate"
We are again together,
In the day's last light
A moment's respite
Drum and guitar; the only voice
Daring the end of war.

Stephen Campbell



Wherever

Two, wanting baby virgins cry for their naked fearful eyes
Into the golden-smooth pools of sin
Where songs of waters falling
Carve their art within the air
And a poet marks his words
For the opened-tears of day.
While the gods above
Of peace and war
Play with marbles in the sky
Raindrops fall down to lovers
Tied up close to breaths of sweets and sweat
And flames for haloes
Crown their silent pains away.
Around them dance the fields
With flowers
Caged and unaware of
their marble-stoned good byes.
Just one last kiss
With whispers
Storms down curtains full of clouds.
Dripping
Precious pearls
Off the smoking fountains of their silky lips
Faces painted red with dawn and wind unfold
As the sinking sun still burns her orange shadows
Through her blazing autumn leaves
She still-colors every mountain.
"Stars alike of lighting wink, will wave the awesome seas to sleep
And black as dark as night can tame the blood of busy man
But only love, in love, will shine the jewels in space with wings,"
So chants the silver moon to all,
"All else can break and fall like broken treasures blown about
Through the empty tunnels of some mind
Where poets' kisses are for all times free."

Curtis Mullin

The Buskers

Roughly forty-eight people
hurtling together
(or, at least, toward the same city)
face front of the bus.

I remember a giddy Vieux-port crowd,
merry elbow prodding for missed jokes,
clapping and stomping and singing out loud
before I got on here.

A flustered mother
pats at a screaming mass of limbs
and looks around, apologizing silently
like a tired hunted animal.

An accomplished young man
offers his just-browsing-thanks kind of smile
and, having lost a staring contest
with the thread on his pants,
absently kneads his left temple against the window.

If someone belched good and loud
right now,
we'd all stiffen or shift expectantly
and incredulous eyes would meet
and dance
and jerk away.

Priya Raju

Swaying Across Town

His calls animate a match
near the seeping gas line
behind her eyes.
If not given the chance,
she would love him.

He always calls her, craving,
when she's sleeping.
Conflicting irregular habits.
His heart is breaking,
the sky is falling,
he hasn't slept in two days,
and she's got endurance.

Jessica Van Horssen

The Yellow Wallpaper

The summer wind blows
Filmy curtains billow, recede
And so
As through lazily blinking eyes
Sun drips over yellow wallpaper

Here and there a vague pattern shows through

Under the glaze of sunlight
Pale rivulets, intertwining branches
Tangle and hide what might lie beneath the surface
Each holds a path that can be followed,
But is inevitably sliced away
At a corner or the window's edge

The intruding curtain shifts
Eyes blink
And there is nothing more than yellow wallpaper

Rose Morton

Untitled

A sumptuous blond dog prancing
in the wild, frozen grasses,
long and yellow.

Tiny bits of light announcing
the frost that lasts
right up till the evening
of an October day.

Stripy sky filtering
the sun that dyes
the world gold
all through the year
but makes it purple and yellow today.

Sarah Dowling

Frank Gehry's Guggenheim

Offspring of a spiraling funnel
Intense, polymorphic, unbreakable
Life exists in this architecture.

Titanium scales reflect the fire unmediated by the broken ozone
womb

Glass gill absorb industrial filth and exhale fresh air for an
entire generation.

Sensuous curves battle convention

Glass eyes

Windows of the soul

Offer glimpses of conception,

Prophecy,

Genetically superior, highly evolved entities

That subsist inside.

This Calculated child's play has
resurrected
irreverent magic.

Nancy Morin

Debriefed

Petals:

My hand throbs in the heat
I wrap my pink hand around the stem
it slices chain
Saw.

Wipe dripping red on white dress now ruined
Crumple dress in heap in shrub
invisible.

Squeeze ripe skin around slash
reeling bloody zigzags all over my

Garden.

Emily Evans

Les Dessinateurs de L'air

(a Dominique Labauvie, sculpteur)

The difference between
he who turns iron bars into
strokes of brush or delicate loops
of pencil in the air and me
is, that he is seeking quintessence of
form through a battle with material
or through basic fusion, his process
is long, drawn out, and steps from
sketch to sketch to model to days of
work and rework.

I have the disadvantage of being
closer to tapping thought as it springs
direct and silent on the page straight from
my searching mind, pausing only
to select what image, what sound
I prefer to transmit my impression,
my idea.

And too I have no limit in time or space,
but I battle with sequence and logic
and grammar
and clarity of image. Seeking
that same quintessence in
another form,
we draw the same air.

Robert Hackett



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